BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by

DANA LEWIS and TOREN SMITH

lettering and retouch by

TOMOKO SAITO

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI
Immortal *rōnin*

RIN
Last heir of the Mutenichi *ryū dojō* destroyed by Itō-*ryū*

MAGATSU
Former Itō-*ryū* swordsman

SHIRA
Terrifyingly sadistic Akagi assassin

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessenchu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for the 100 good people who died at his hand under his corrupted lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

Two years earlier, when her parents were murdered on her fourteenth birthday by Anotsu Kagehisa's Itō-*ryū* swordsmen, Rin Asano became part of a mad revenge cycle which began when Anotsu's grandfather was thrown out of the Asano clan's Mutenichi-*ryu dojo*. Fifty years before. A quest for vengeance was instilled in Anotsu; a similar quest now haunts Rin. Upon learning of Manji, she enlisted his aid to destroy the Itō *ryū* and avenge her parents.

Last issue:

Manji and Magatsu were traveling to Kaga. An odd couple indeed. Magatsu went along to seize the opportunity to kill Shira, who has been hunting Manji. And now he's got his chance. In typical fashion, Shira surprised them with his new weapon, the remnants of the arm Manji cut off. Its bones sharpened to painful points. So now Magatsu and Shira are going at it, and it's a bloody, feverish battle. Both have drawn blood.

designer: DEBRA BAILEY assistant editor: MICHAEL CARRIGLITTO editor: TIM ERVIN-GORE publisher: MIKE RICHARDSON

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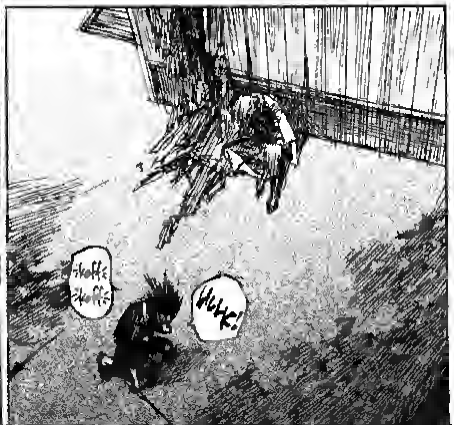
無限の住人

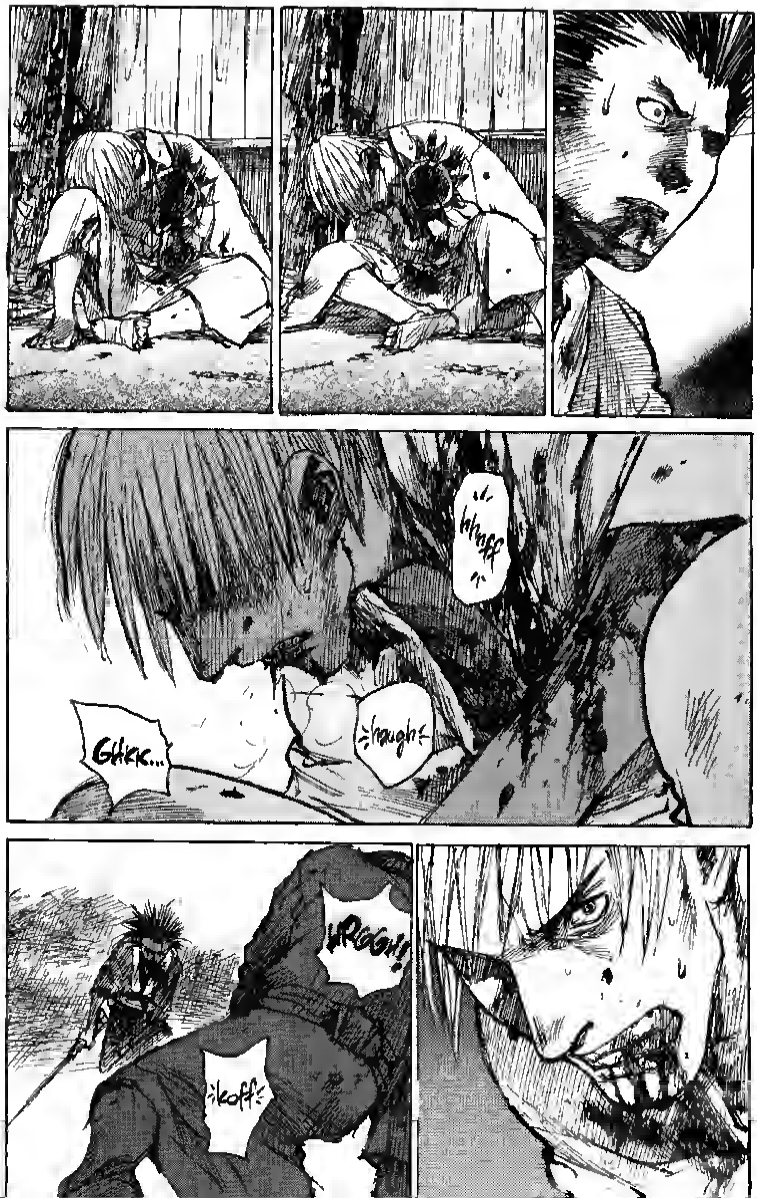
FALL FROST

– part five –

AAA--

.....
:koff:
:hahhe
:huff:


:koff:
:koff:
Huh!


Ghkk...
:laugh:
:kuff:
!Rrgh!

G-GOOD JOB, PAL...
SHIT...
.....
.....
D-DAMN...

HURT ME THIS BAD... YOU BASTARD...
KILLING YOU EASY... AIN'T GONNA HAPPEN.

MAGATSU... TAITO.
kofF
GET IT...?

NAW... WAIT A SEC... THAT OUGHT TO BE...
"TAI-TAI," YEAH?
?!
=pteh=
.....
Y-YOU SCUM!
KEH! SCORED WITH THAT ONE, DIDN'T I?
??? YOU DIDN'T KNOW FOR SURE...?
NOT UNTIL NOW. SO...THAT WAS YOUR LITTLE SWEETIE.
TOO SKINNY, BUT AN OKAY PIECE OF ASS.

LOOK! THANKS TO THAT SHITHEAD MANJI!
YOU THINK I BEEN HITTING ANY WHORE-HOUSES LATELY?
HEH'E
TRUE ENOUGH. BUT...
...I REMEMBER THAT ONE.
YOU'RE JUST SCREWING WITH ME.
A BASTARD LIKE YOU DOESN'T REMEMBER EVERYONE HE KILLS...
SO, YEAH, I REMEMBER.
THAT WAS THE LAST BITCH I EVER SCREWED.
SPARE ME THE SHOCK, KID. SHE WAS A WHORE.
SPREADING HER LEGS WAS HER BUSINESS, YEAH? FOR ANY-BODY THAT HAD THE CASH...
GEH HAH HAH
I DID HER BEFORE I "DID" HER.

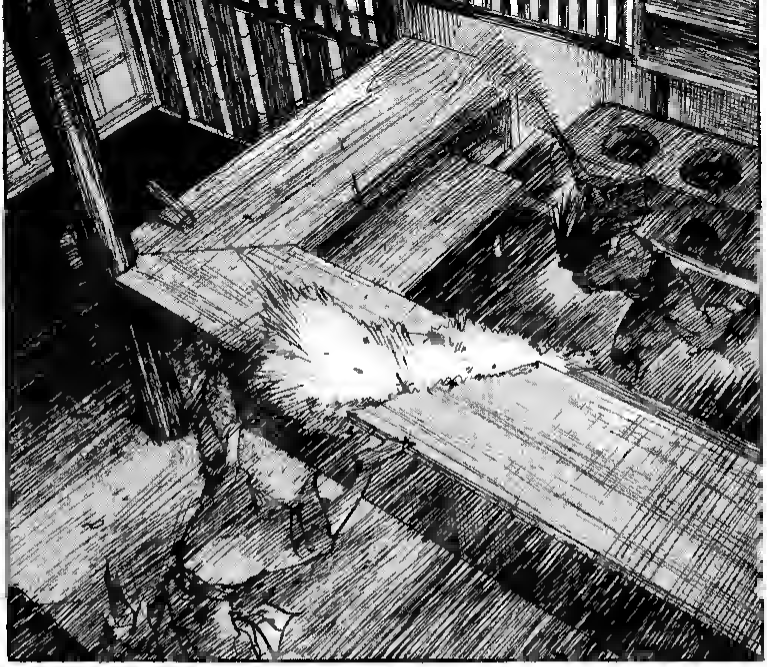
WANNA HEAR A COOL TRICK?
.....
NOT FROM YOU.
:kofff:
HEY, KID...
NORMALLY, I AIN'T INTERESTED IN SCREWING, SEE? TOO BORING.
BUT...
HEH HEH HEH...
LEMME TELL YA A SECRET.
GET INSIDE 'EM...
...THEN START CUTTING THEM UP!

GET IT...? WHEN YA CUT BITCHES WHERE IT *HURTS*...
...FIRST THE MUSCLES GO *LIMP*... AND THEN THEY *ALL* TIGHTEN UP.
THOSE MUSCLES TOO. KIDDO HEH HEH HEH... THINK ABOUT IT...*YOU'RE* A GUY.
THERE'S NOTHING *LIKE* IT, MAN!
...*YOUR* GIRL? SHE WAS ONLY NUMBER *FIVE* ON THE HIT PARADE.
NOW, HEY... I AIN'T NO *SERIAL KILLER*.
I DON'T DO IT THAT WAY *EVERY* TIME... SO...
THAT'S WHY I REMEMBER HER!
GYAH HAH HAH!

THAD
WHOA..!
GASP

HEY, MAN...
...I WASN'T FINISHED TELL--.
OOOHAA!
HE'S LOST IT...
WELL, SHIT.
NNG..
KAO!
-right-
-left-

SPEAK
OH NO YOU DON'T!!
HOLY CRAP...!
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK



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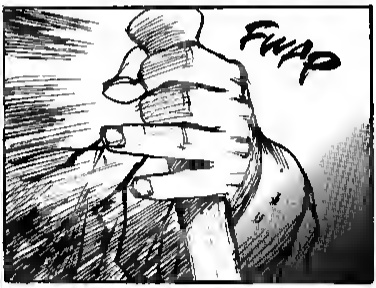
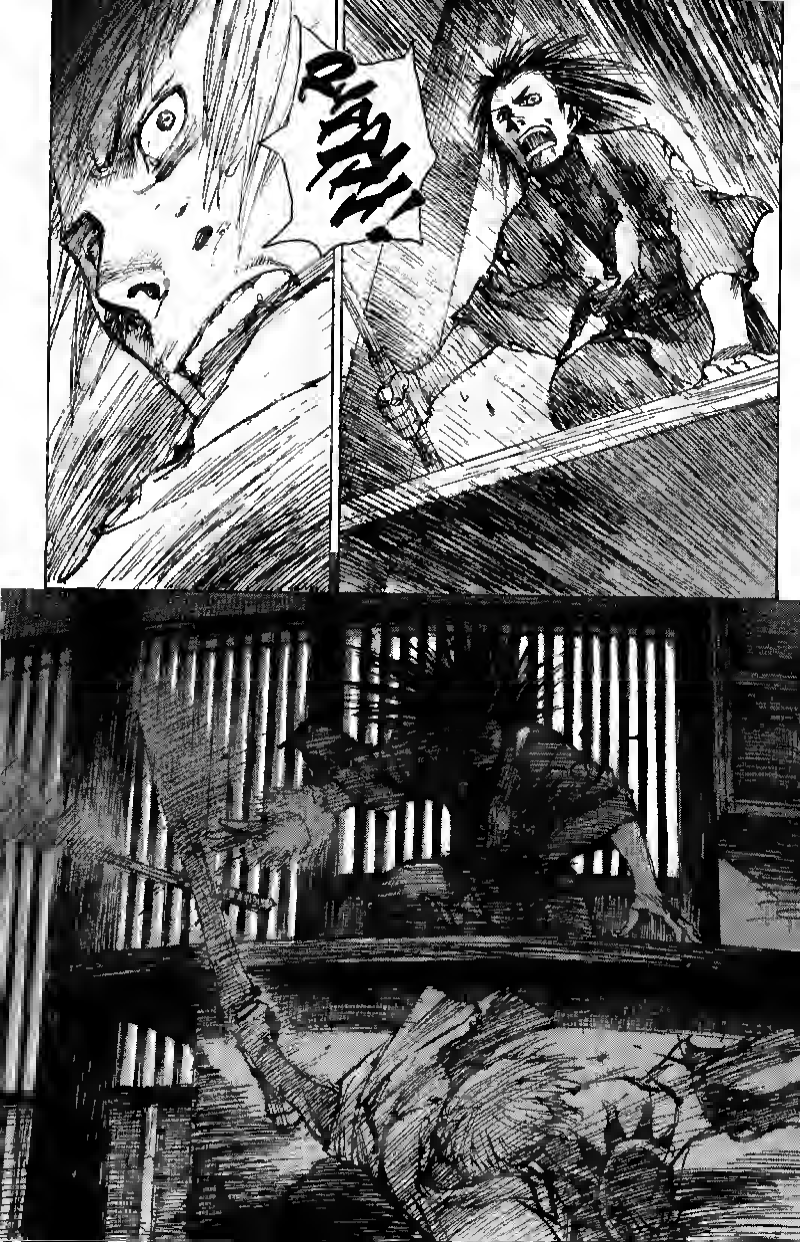

FWAP

NNGN...
!


DASH!

ヤメテ!!

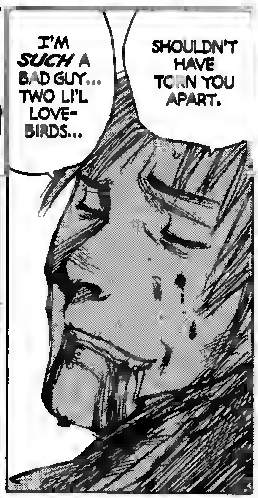
NGK...
.....

.....
.....
HA...
HA HA...
BWA HAH HAH HAH!
GAME OVER! AND THANKS, MAGATSU TAITO!

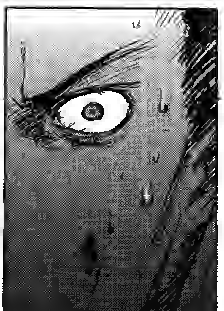
NO, REALLY! I *OWE YOU*, BUDDY!
FORGETTING YOU LEFT *THIS THING* LYING AROUND... *GOOD ONE*, KID!

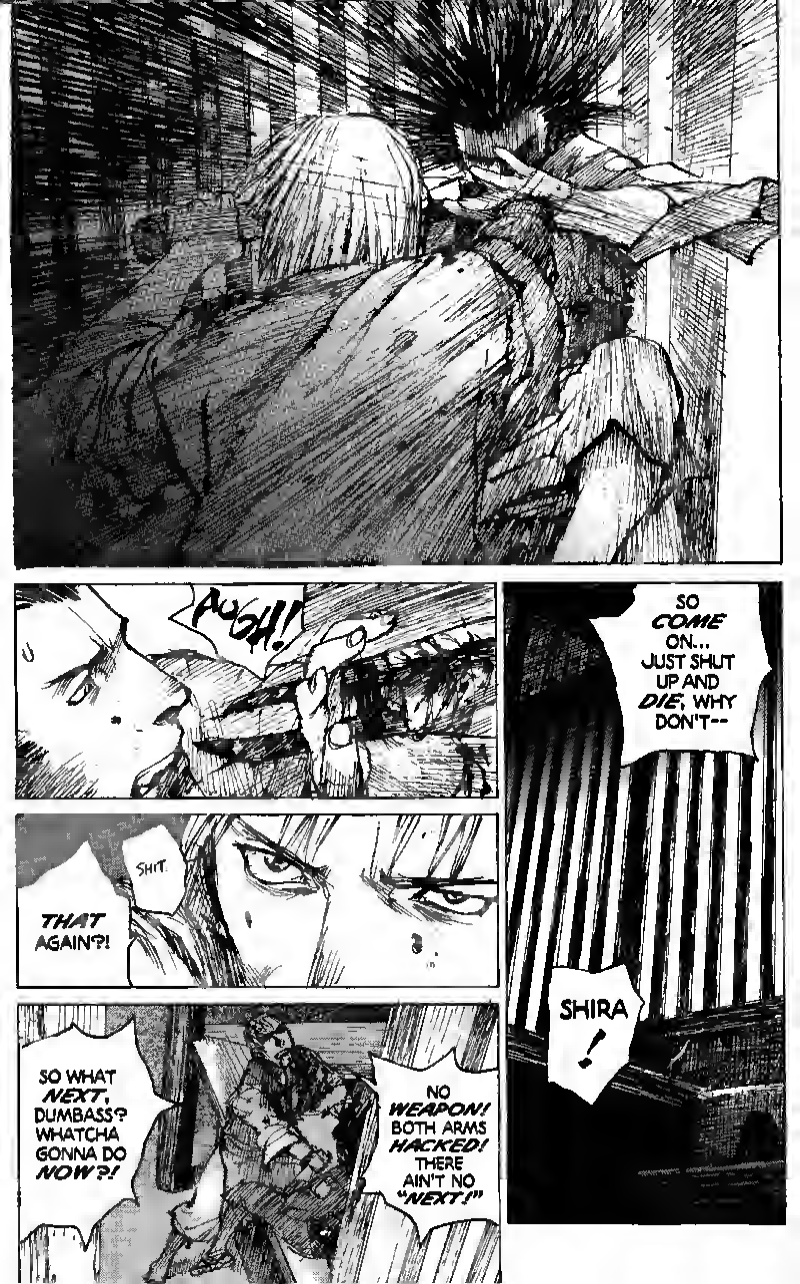
.....
.....
UHNG...

AWW, DON'T LOOK SO *SAD*.
YOU'RE GONNA MEET YOUR LITTLE CUTIE, YEAH?


I'M *SUCH* A BAD GUY... TWO LI'L LOVE-BIRDS...
SHOULDN'T HAVE TORN YOU APART.

BUT THAT'S OVER *NOW!*

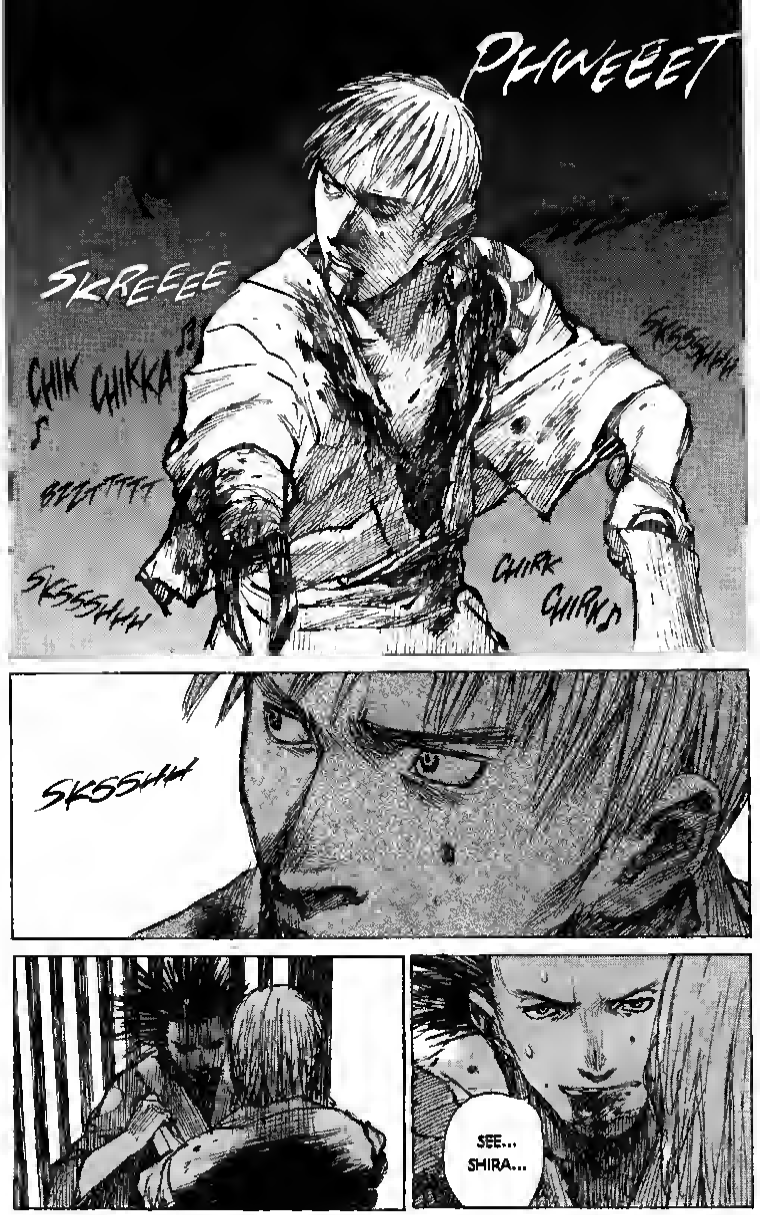



AUGH!!
SO COME ON... JUST SHUT UP AND DIE, WHY DON'T--
SHIRA!
SHIT.
THAT AGAIN?!
SO WHAT NEXT, DUMBASS? WHATCHA GONNA DO NOW?!
NO WEAPON! BOTH ARMS HACKED! THERE AIN'T NO "NEXT!"

SHIRA... TELL ME... WHERE WERE YOU BORN?
LOOK... IT HURTS, ALL RIGHT. AND I'M SCREWED, JUST LIKE YOU SAID.
...I'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE GUY WHO KILLED ME.
HEH... BUT JUST FOR LAUGHS IN THE NEXT WORLD...
HEH HEH HEH...
...?
HAH...!
NO CRYING LIKE A PUSSY. I LIKE THAT.
SO, CAME TO TERMS WITH IT, DID YA?

ME, I'M NOT SOME COUNTRY BOY LIKE YOU.
BORN IN THE *HEART* OF EDO, MAN. NAGAHAMA, IN NIHON-BASHI.
HEH... ..... NO KIDDING.
THEN, IN THIS BATTLE, THE "COUNTRY BOY" HELD THE HIGH GROUND...
...RIGHT FROM THE START!
HEH, HEH...
WE'RE SO OUT OF BREATH...
...CAN'T HARDLY FEEL IT NOW.

BUT DID YOU *NOTICE*? WHEN WE WERE OUT IN FRONT OF THE HUT?
THE AIR AROUND HERE'S A BIT... *COOLER* THAN THE HIGHWAY.
HUH... ?!
WHAT *SHIT* ARE YOU TALKING *NOW*, ASSHOLE?
HEH... GUESS YOU DIDN'T.
THEN I'LL HELP YOU OUT.
CLEAN YOUR *EARS*, MAN.
BIRDS... INSECTS... WHAT *ELSE* DO YOU HEAR?


PHWEEET
SKREEEE
CHIK CHIKKA
BZZZTTTTT
SKSSSHHH
SKSSSHHH
CHIRK CHIRK
SKSSHH
SEE... SHIRA...

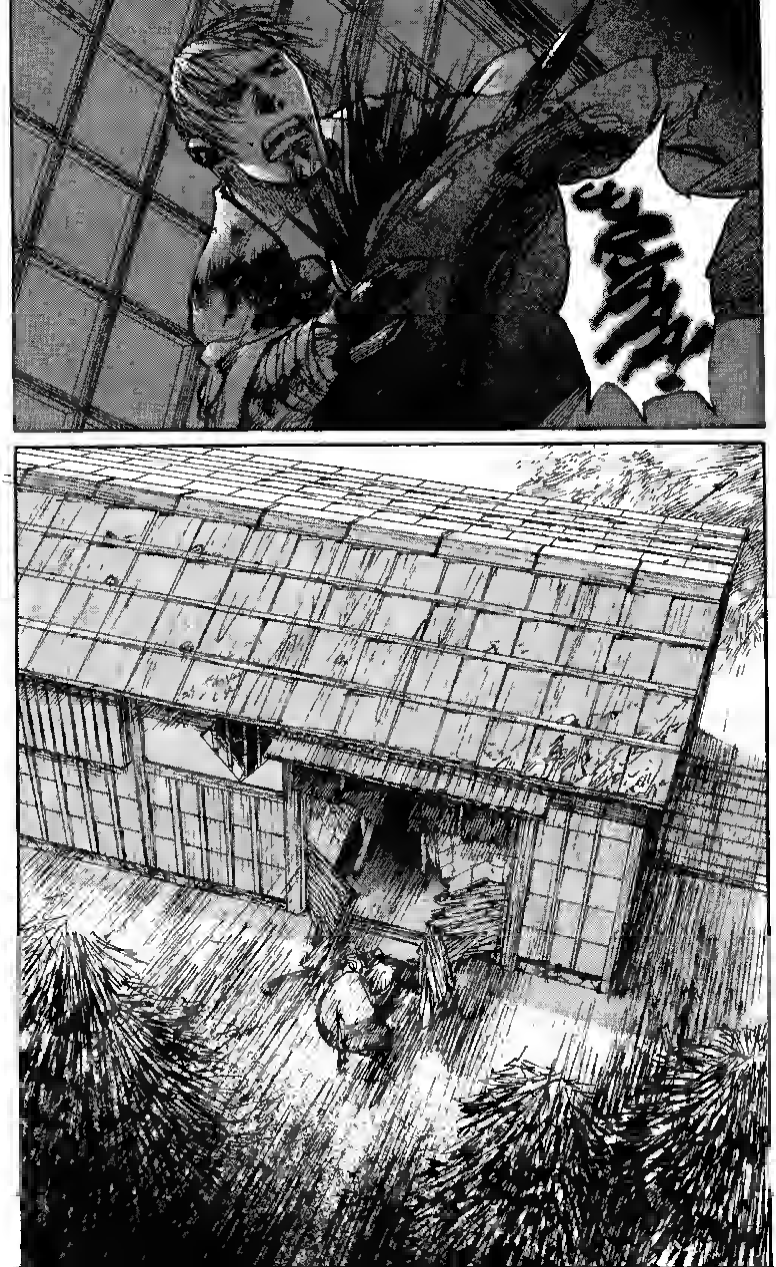
YOU DON'T ALWAYS NEED A SWORD TO KILL SOMEONE.
YOU CAN DO IT LIKE... THIS!

SKLCH
?!

WHA--
NNG!

GCH

!?
NNGF



WHAT THE F-?! HEY!
YOU THINK YOU'RE MANJI OR SOMETHING?!
LEMME GO! DAMN!
NNG!

YOU THINK YOU GOT AN EDGE ON ME OUT HERE?
GRAB A BRAIN! NOT WHEN YOU'RE ALL HACKED UP, YOU IDIOT!
BWA HAHA!
HEY, THANKS FOR THE RIDE, BUDDY!
PUT ME DOWN WHEREVER... I'LL JUST KILL YOU THERE!
!?
SKKSSHRRRMMM
BB

RMMBBB
RMBBB
AH!!
Noo!
.....
.....
....?!
THAP
SMAK

RUGGH
RMMBB
TO BE CONTINUED...!

LETTERS

send letters to:

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10956 SE MAIN STREET, MILWAUKIE, OREGON 97222
www.darkhorse.com • blade@darkhorse.com • www.studioproteus.com

How about this battle, eh? Typical Samura fashion—at least three issues long, lotsa blood and pain, and wisecracks smattered here and there—and it never seems to end! The man hasn't lost his touch, even if the sword fights don't and in flowery double-page spreads. Yeah, we miss those too.

To da crew wit da voodoo

I must say, the "Beasts" storyline has really pushed the limits of what I care to stomach. Torture is not an easy thing to watch, and Samura details it a lot, seemingly not holding back anything. I don't know why he had to go so far. Thankfully, the nails-put-under-Hyakurin's-fingernails scene was not shown in-process, at least. Have there ever been interviews of Samura printed in the States? I'd like someone to ask him about his need to display violence and torture in such detail. Is he sadistic? I can't help but wonder.

Regardless, the comic is still one I must follow as it is a good one, with great characters and art. Luckily, the extreme moments are not so common. If it was nonstop violent and torture-filled twelve months a year, I couldn't justify buying it. Thankfully, he isn't that hell-bent on wiggin' 'ns outs.)

Thanks for putting out this excellent title,
Denny Dukes
via e-mail

You know, Denny, I can't speak for Samura and I haven't lucked upon any interviews, but for a little perspective, we'll tell you about some of the phone card art of his you can find on the Internet. Or—maybe it's better if we didn't. But to answer your question, Samura seems to enjoy creating torture art. Either that, or he gets paid well to do so. Yes, it's kinda odd, but it's so well drafted!

Hi.

I have a small complaint about the The Story So Far section of Issue #70 ("Beasts" #5 of 7).

The previous issue left us in a bit of a cliffhanger and so when I bought Issue #70 a month later, I read the Story So Far part to refresh my memory. The thing is, the last sentence of it told me what happened BEFORE it happened in the current book! (It tells us that Gilchi saves Hyakutin.)

Unfortunately, that kinda spoiled that issue for me. Maybe you could be a bit more careful in writing these summaries?

Thanks,
Phong
via e-mail

Oh, boy. Sorry about that, Phong. How about this issue for a cliffhanger, eh?' Sometimes we find ourselves editing multiple issues at once, and what has happened so far can get confused in the process. But we'll try to be a lot more careful in the future.

Thanks for reading another great issue of *Blade of the Immortal*. Next up: who's going to fall? It's the conclusion of "Fall Frost."

ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal*, Manji, has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "wellare" from *su* — "well" + *asti* — "he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, the swastika was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian coinage), including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *sauvastika*, which moves in a counter-clockwise direction, and is called the manji in Japanese. *The sauvastika generally stands for right and often for magical practices. The swastika*, whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the swastika has ancient and honorable origins and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1782-3). *There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. Those meanings did not exist until after 1910.*

NEXT

Next month: Part six of "Fall Frost."

DARK HORSE COMICS MANGA
BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL
77
FALL FRONT 5 OF 6
HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE
OF THE IMMORTAL
IT'S A BATTLE TO THE BRINK!
DIRECT SALES
07711

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Immortal Scanner

Nice enough to distro the stuff

THE STORY SO FAR

- Series: Blade of the Immortal
- Date: 2003.08.20
- Volume: 12
- Chapter: 077
- Format: Left to Right
- pages: 00-33 (34 jpgs w/cover)
- Size: 10.6MB
- Source: Dark Horse Montly Issues (UPC 6156895340)
- Last Rls: BotI Issue 76

Letters section is back. Still useless but at least you know there are Blade of the Immortal phone cards

ENJOY!